



CASTLEMAINE

NATURALIST 14

JUNE 1977

Pres: Mr R. Bradfield

Sec: Mrs R Mills

V.Pres: Mr G Sitch

Mr G Broadway

Treas: Mr L. Bransgrove

Committee: Miss J Chapman,

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Singleton, Mr & Mrs

M. Winterbottom, Miss F

McIver, Mr E. Perkins

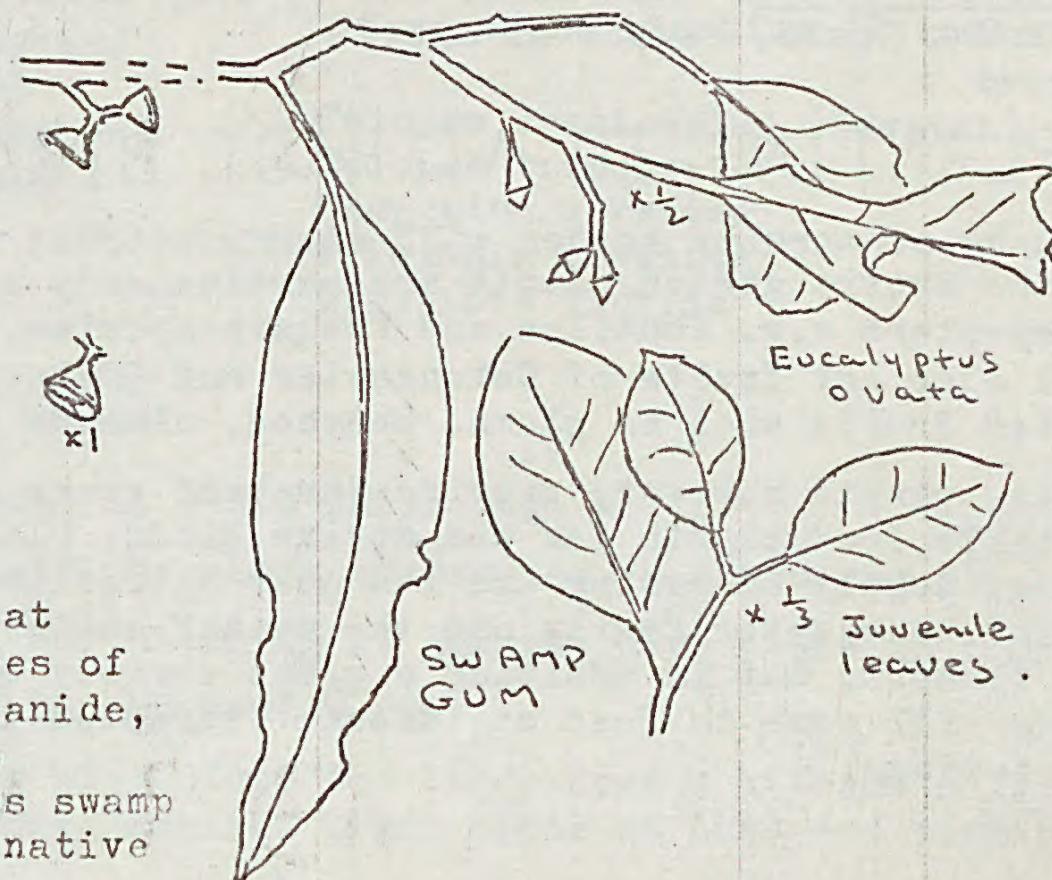
Monthly meetings are held on the second Friday of each month at the Castlemaine Education Centre (SEC building, Mostyn St) Visitors and prospective members are invited to attend the club's session.

SWAMP GUM (*Eucalyptus ovata*)

River red-gums are a common sight on the inland water ways of Australia, but are replaced by manna and swamp gums in the colder and wetter areas. Castlemaine must be close to the limit of the red-gum, for red gum and manna gum grow together in the Vaughan/Glenluce area. At higher altitudes red gum is completely replaced. Swamp gum is common in such areas, being found close to streams or in low lying swampy areas.

The closest sample

I know of is a small clump on Mt Alexander*; the clump is divided by the boundary fence of the old Koala Park. It is surprising that the entire clump was not included in the park, as experience elsewhere shows that at some seasons the leaves of manna gum produce cyanide, and are poisonnous to koalas. At these times swamp gum would be an alternative



Swamp gum is easily recognised; the leaves are much wider than usual, the juvenile leaves are oval, the fruit is cone shaped and buds are double cones; each of these is quite distinctive. As would be expected, swamp gum is associated with other wet-climate trees e.g. messmate, manna gum and peppermint.

The scientific name, ovata, means egg-shaped, no doubt referring to the shape of the leaves.

(*Mr H. Parnaby first gave me the location of swamp gum here)

ATTRACTING NATIVE BIRDS

1. Plant native plants to provide nectar, insects and shelter.
(See the list below for suitable kinds of plants).
2. Put out food for the birds. Recipes for nectar and bird puddings are also given below. Some things to remember about food for birds:-
 (a) Don't provide too much food, or make the birds dependent on it. Let the food run out sometimes so that the birds are forced to forage for themselves.
 (b) Don't try to tame the birds; unwary birds can easily be trapped.
 (c) Keep the food out of reach of cats, or you may lure the birds to destruction. If need be, put the food on string with a pulley, so that the food may be hauled out of reach.
3. Provide water; this alone can be very effective at attracting birds. Again, beware of cats.

PLANTING TO ATTRACT BIRDS

[by]

Geoff Sitch

A bushy or shrubby garden will always attract some birds. Some of the exotic garden plants are particularly attractive to the honeyeaters e.g. Abutilon and Fuchsia species, and native birds will also eat fruits of Cotoneaster and Crataegus and also cultivated fruits such as plums, peaches, almonds etc.

Native plants however, provide the best range of plants that are suitable food plants for our native birds. Plants which provide a good supply of nectar are the most attractive to birds. Members of the honeyeater family and the nectar eating parrots flock to the flowers, but in addition a great variety of insectivorous birds will come to feed on insects attracted to the blossoms and the foliage.

Plants should be grouped to form thickets as the birds feel more at ease in the shelter and safety thereby afforded. It is possible to select a range of plants having sufficient variety in their flowering seasons to make food producing blossoms available at any time during the year.

Some suitable honey flora are

Adenanthes (all species)
Angophora (all species)
Anigosanthos (all species
 Kangaroo Paws)
Astroloma conostephioides
Astroloma humifusum
Banksia (all species)
Beaufortia (all species)
Billardiera (all species;
 climbers)
Blandfordia (all species;
 Christmas Bells)
Brachysema (all species)
Callistemon (all species;
 Bottlebrush)
Calothamnus (all sp; netbushes)
Correa (all species)
Dryandera (all species)
Epacris (all species)
Eremophila glabra
Eremophila maculata
Eremophila maculata aurea
Grevillea (all species)
Hakea (all species)
Hibiscus (all sp; native)
Homoranthus (all sp)
Kunzea ambigua
Kunzea baxteri

Eucalyptus (all species). Some good ones for the garden are
E. leucoxylon rosea
E. lehmanii
E. torquata
E. caesia
E. grossa
E. preissiana
E. macrocarpa
E. erythrocorys
E. tetraptera
E. platypus
Lambertia (all species)
Leptospermum flavescens
Lomatia (all species)
Melaleuca (all species)
Pandorea pandorana (climber)
Pittosporum phillyreoides
Prostanthera aspalathoides
Prostanthera walterii
Regelia (all species)
Rylestonea cernua
Stenocarpus sinuatus (Firewheel tree)
Telopea speciosissima (Waratah)
Telopea truncata
Templetonia retusa
Tristania conferta
Tristania laurina

FOOD FOR BIRDS

Suet Hang up the suet in a net onion bag

Meat scraps. These will be eaten by magpies, kookaburras etc.

Seed Parrot seed is worth trying if parrots live close to your home

Cheese Cheese is eaten by most birds.

It is a good idea to place food for birds near a kitchen or lounge window, so that friends can see birds close at hand and perhaps copy your example.

ARTIFICIAL NECTAR

A recipe for nectar is

Brown sugar 1/2 kg (1 lb)

Water 600 ml (1 pt)

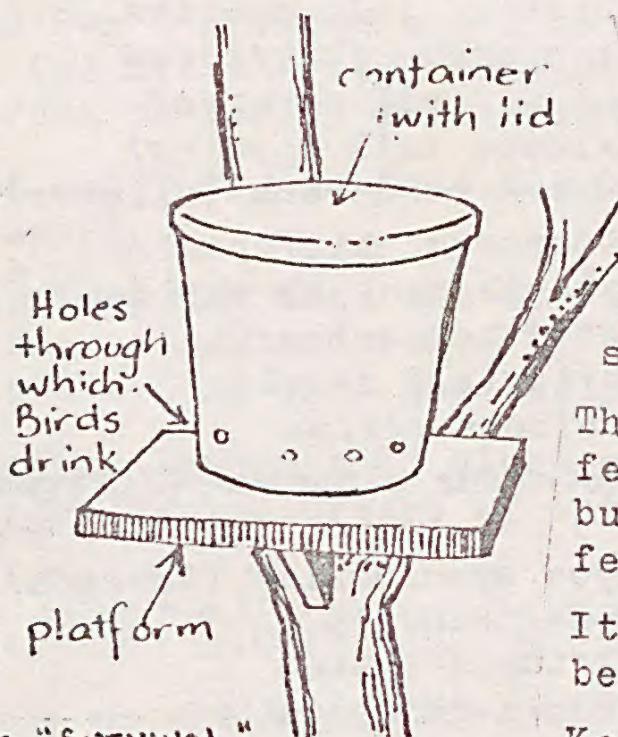
This is the stock solution.

To use, add one part of syrup to two parts of water.

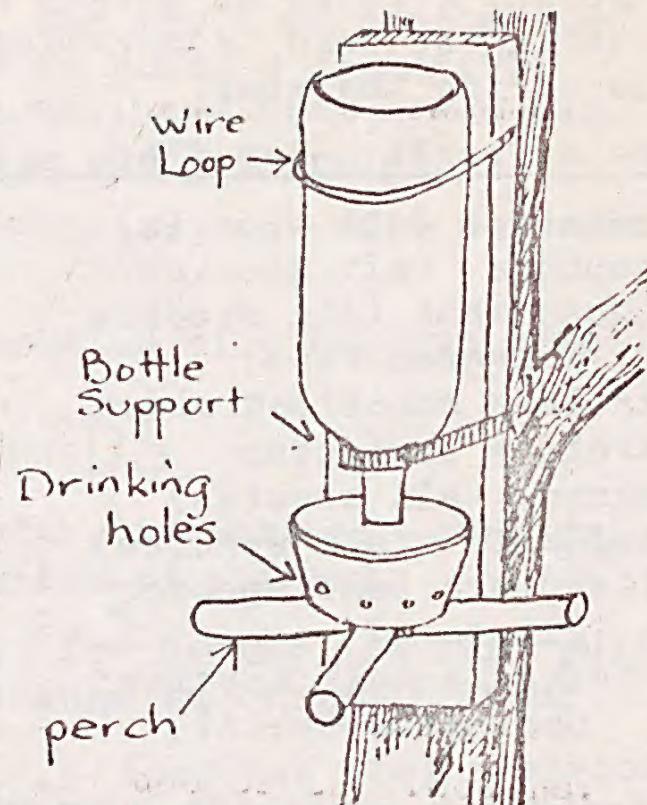
The mixture will ferment, particularly in summer. To overcome this, change the mixture each 2-3 days, and wash out the container thoroughly.

If desired, 2-3 drops of infant vitamin concentrate can be added.

Store the stock solution in the refrigerator



From "SURVIVAL"



(from "SURVIVAL")

FEEDERS

Two types of feeders are shown.

As the watered down mixture will ferment, a large supply is not needed at first, and the simpler style is perhaps best.

The ideal beak hole will enable nectar feeding birds with long beaks to drink, but prevent sparrows and the like from feeding.

It may take some time before birds begin to make use of the feeders.

Keep the feeder out of reach of cats.

BIRD PUDDINGS

First recipe

A mixture of scraps, including

bread bird seed apple cores breakfast cereal

Hold together with melted dripping. Set in a container. Use as little dripping as possible so that the pudding will not melt away in hot weather. A piece of string should be set in the middle (rather like a wick in a candle). Hang out of reach of cats.

Second Bird Pudding Recipe

Mix equal parts of

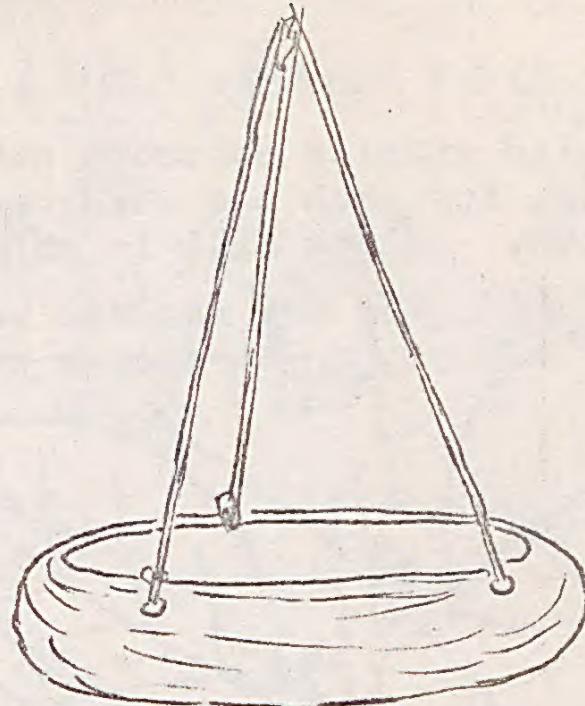
Honey or sugar

Rolled oats

Dripping

As in the previous recipe,
set in a container with a
wick; when set remove from
the container and hang up
away from cats.

Right A pottery bird feeder.



A NEW WATTLE FOR THE DISTRICT

One of the interesting exhibits at the May meeting was a specimen of wattle found at Sandon

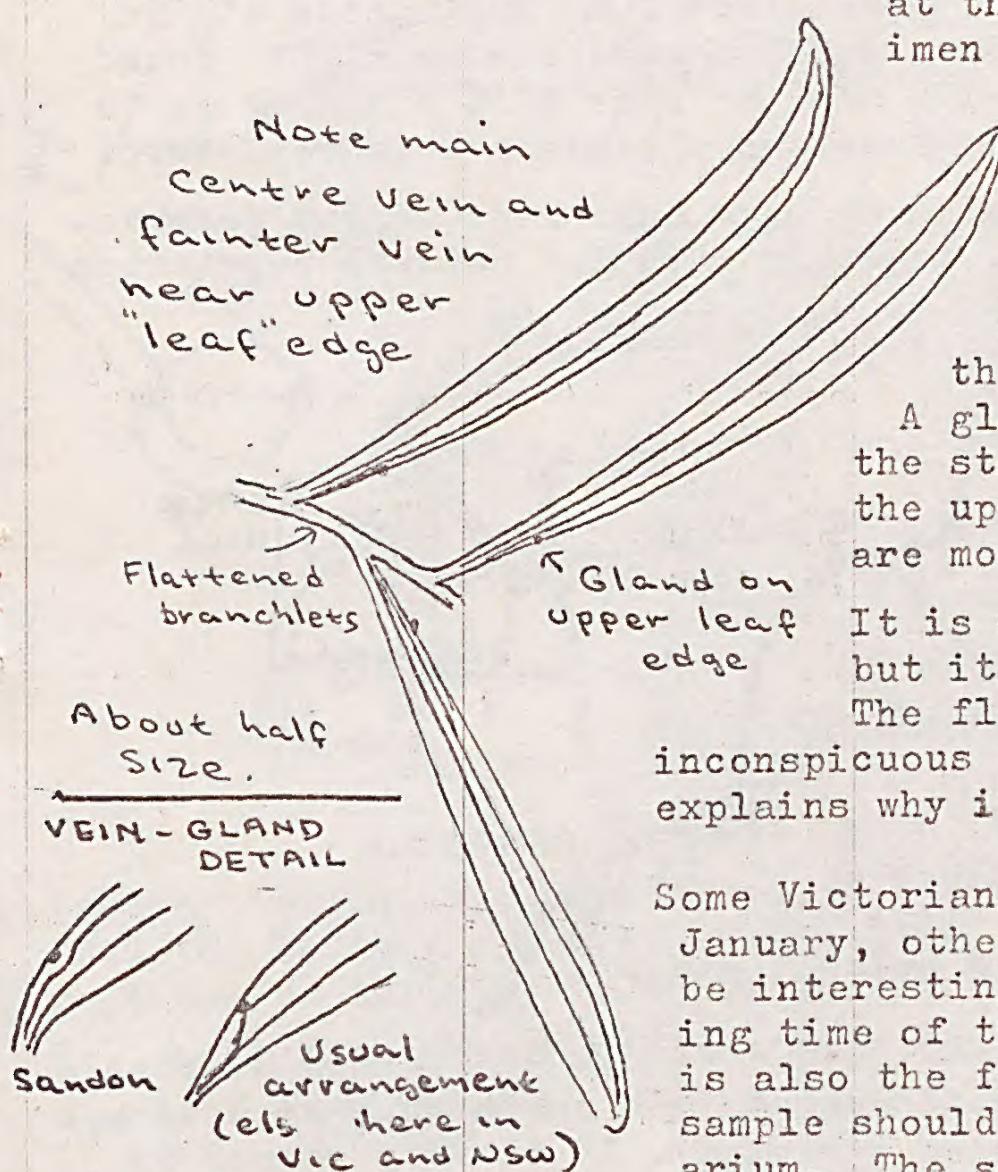
by Mr F. Blake. The wattle is believed to be *Acacia difformis*.

It is distinguished by the main vein with a fainter second vein near the upper edge of the "leaf".

A gland can also be seen near the start of the "leaf", again on the upper edge. The branchlets are more or less flattened.

It is a rare wattle in Victoria but it is more common in N.S.W. The flowers are particularly inconspicuous for a wattle, this probably explains why it was slow to be discovered.

Some Victorian specimens flower in January, others in Winter. It would be interesting to find out the flowering time of the Sandon sample. As this is also the first record for grid N, a sample should then be sent to the Herbarium. The sketches also show that the



vein-gland arrangement in the Sandon plants is not typical.
(I do not know of a common name; *difformis* = of unusual form) E.P.

EXCURSION TO BLACK HILL

May 21, 1977

Isolated granite outcrops such as Black Hill are always interesting, for each has a character, and often natural history, of its own. Black Hill is no exception.

The day was too wet to survey the whole reserve, but enough was seen for the party to decide on a return visit.

Black Hill is used as a source of gravel. The quarried areas have been planted with native plants, mainly acacia, melaleuca, callistemon and eucalyptus. Perhaps the most spectacular of these was the hairpin banksia (*Banksia spinulosa*) which was in full flower.

Of interest too was the patch of Grampians Gum (*Eucalyptus alpina*). This is a dwarf shrub-like eucalypt found naturally only on some of the higher parts of the Grampians. It grows very well here.

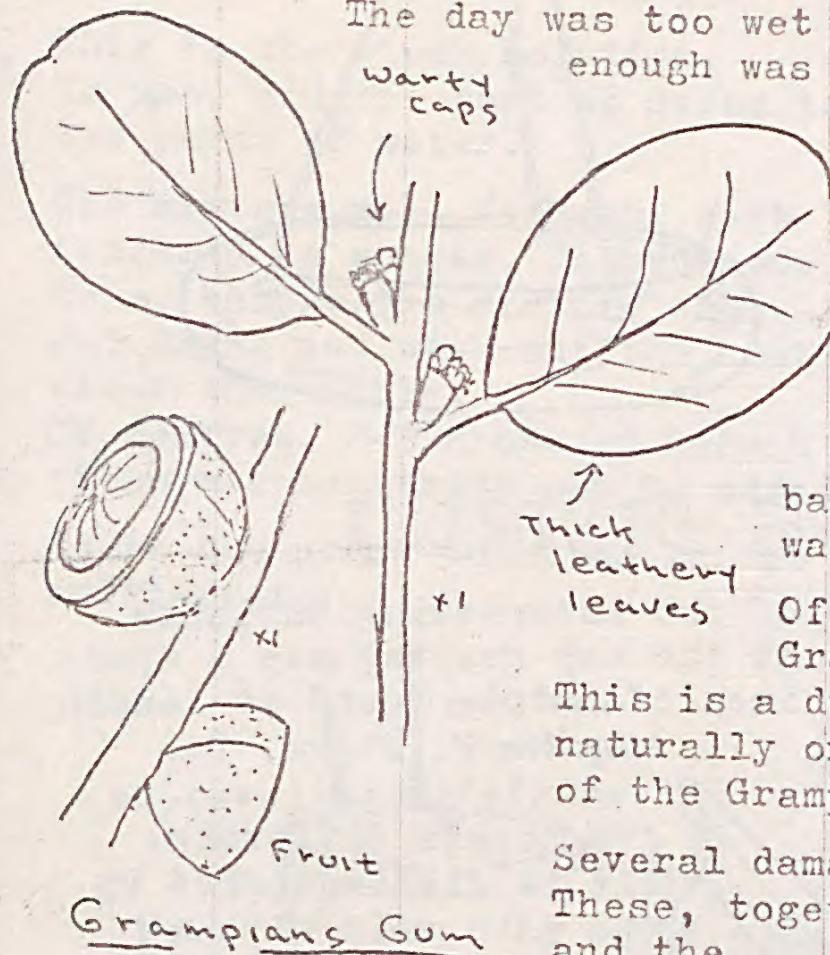
Several dams have been made on the reserve. These, together with the natural vegetation and the other

plants should make this an excellent bird area, particularly when the bottlebrush and melaleucas are in flower.

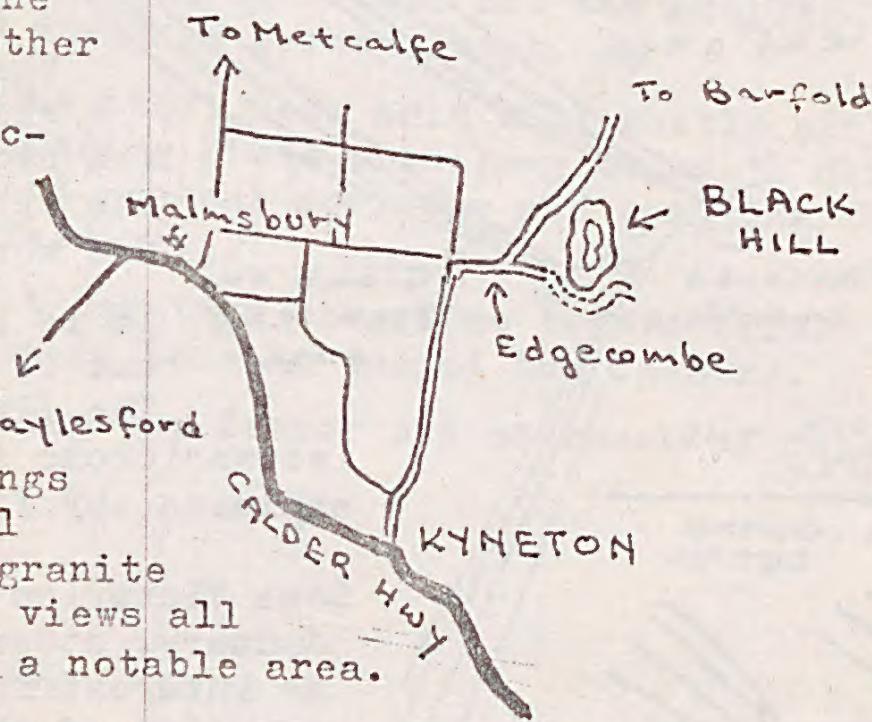
With proper management the reserve will become more interesting in the time to come as the plantings mature. These, the natural vegetation, the beautiful granite boulders and the extensive views all add together to make this a notable area.

THIS MONTH'S MOTIF

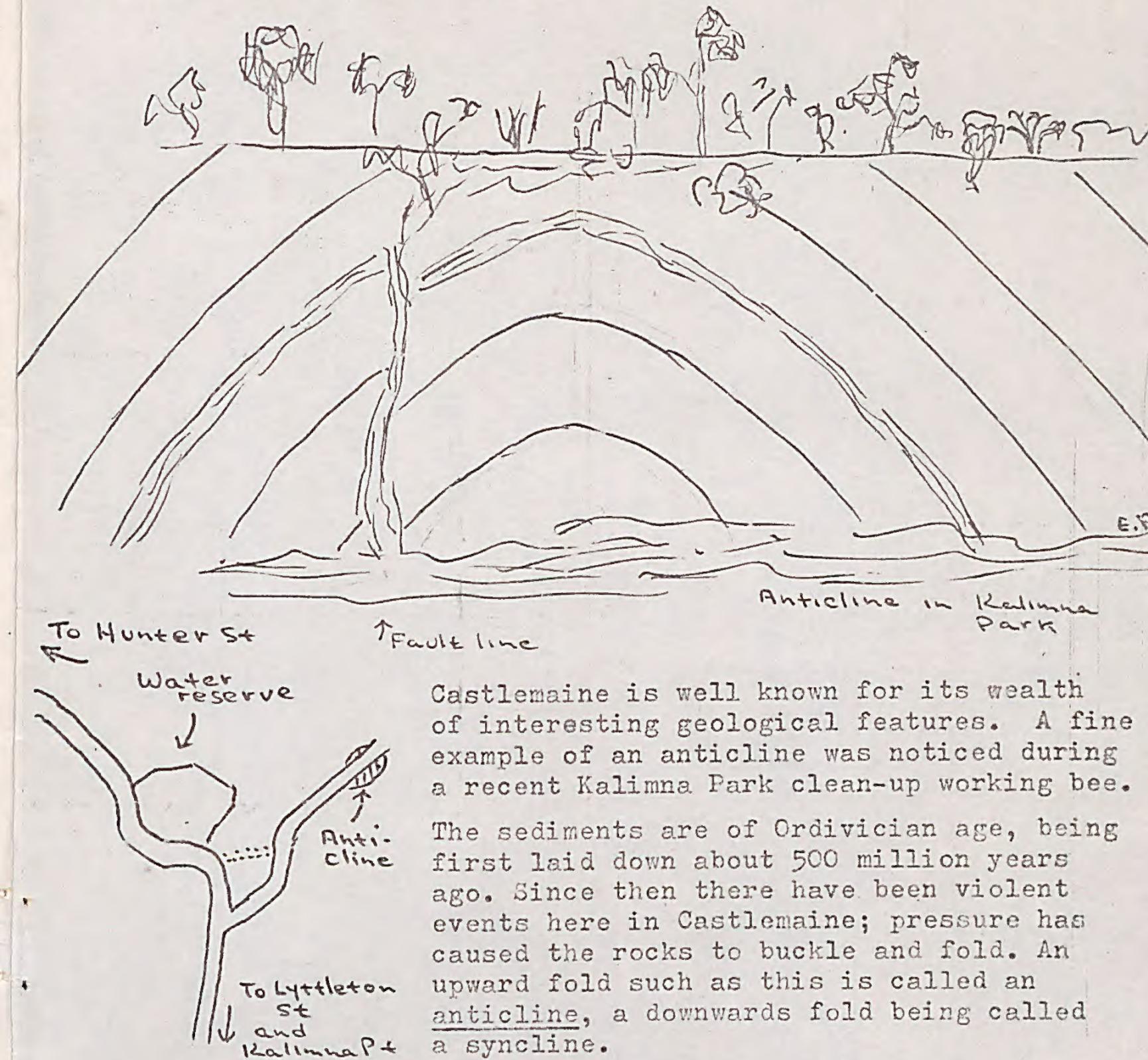
The plant shown this month on page 1 is the Chocolate lily (*Dichopogon strictus*). It is very common in local forests, flowering in late spring. Drawing is by Geoff Sitch.



Grampians Gum



AN ANTICLINE IN KALIMNA PARK



Castlemaine is well known for its wealth of interesting geological features. A fine example of an anticline was noticed during a recent Kalimna Park clean-up working bee.

The sediments are of Ordovician age, being first laid down about 500 million years ago. Since then there have been violent events here in Castlemaine; pressure has caused the rocks to buckle and fold. An upward fold such as this is called an anticline, a downwards fold being called a syncline.

A small fault is also visible. There has been a vertical movement of a few centimetre. A line of broken rock can be seen along the fault line. The distance of the movement can be found by matching up the rock layers.

Elsewhere in the district are many faults, with movements often measured in metres, or even thousands of metres.

The anticline is easy to find; it is on the eastern side of the first cutting on the Kalimna Park Tourist Road, after the water tank.

CLUB PROGRAM

June Meeting Friday June 10

Speaker: Mr B. Singleton

Subject: Japanese Gardens

July Meeting Friday July 8

Speaker: M. E. Wilkinson

Subject: Geology

August Meeting Friday Aug 12

Speaker: Mr E. Whitbourn

Subject: Victorian Birds and their habitats.

CAMERA CLUB PROGRAM

Club members are invited to attend these meetings, at the Education Centre

Tues June 21 Close-up Photography. Speaker: E. Perkins.

Tues July 19 Problems of Nature Photography. Speaker will be Alan Hartup

FROM THE COMMITTEE

Treasurer Credit \$64.90

A/c- \$10 to Ed Centre for proposed newsletter expenses (The Ed Centre is planning a monthly news sheet; we could use it for publicity etc.)

EXCURSIONS

Sat June 11 Koala Park

Leave Ed. Centre at 1.00

Leader: Mr Winterbottom

Sunday July 10 Mt Tarrangower

Leave Ed. Centre at 1.00 or meet at the Shire Hall, Maldon at 1.30 p.m.

Oct 8-9 Grampians campout

Nov 6 Mt Beckworth Joint excursion with Creswick FNC

The attention of club members is drawn to the Term 2 syllabus of the Education Centre.

Highlight of the program would be

NATIVE PLANTS

Landscaping and propagation

Thursday, 7.30 - 9.30 p.m.
4 weeks. \$8.00

Commencing June 16th.

The classes will be taken by Geoff Sitch.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single: \$3

Family: \$5

Student/Junior \$1.

THE CLIFF BEAUGLEHOLE FUND At the WVFNCA meeting on 24/4/77 the following motion was passed

"In order that the Association's objective of having the list of plants compiled by Mr A.C. Beauglehole updated and made accessible for use by conservationists and other interested people, that all Field Naturalists Clubs and kindred organisations in Victoria be asked to undertake to subscribe a substantial sum (minimum \$50) to a fund to be used in an endeavour to attract a Government grant to allow this work to be undertaken", "that should the response be satisfactory the Pres. and Sec. be authorised to make an approach to the Minister of Conservation by deputation", "that the subscriptions be payable only if the required Government commitment is forthcoming".

The Club Committee believes that the book should be published, and will ask members to consider making a donation. 25 members each giving \$2 would make our \$50 contribution.